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'Like a Horror Movie': Top Scientists Alarmed and Embarrassed by Agencies' Failure to Follow Science on COVID

Top doctors and scientists at the leading U.S. public health agencies are "frustrated, exasperated and alarmed" about the direction of the agencies they work for, according to the authors of a Substack post. They're also embarrassed — about "bad science."

By Megan Redshaw

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Top doctors and scientists at the leading U.S. public health agencies are "frustrated, exasperated and alarmed" about the direction of the agencies they work for, according to the authors of a Substack post published last week.

They're also embarrassed — about "bad science." And many are leaving.

"It's like a horror movie I'm being forced to watch and I can't close my eyes," said one senior official with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). "People are getting bad advice and we can't say anything."

The comment was one of many culled from calls and text messages between officials and the article's co-authors, Marty Makary M.D., M.P.H., and Tracy Beth Høeg M.D., Ph.D.

Makary and Høeg said the officials who spoke to them agreed to be quoted — but only anonymously, for fear of professional repercussions.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are plagued with "low morale" and "high turnover," officials told Makary and Høeg.

"At the NIH, doctors and scientists complain to us about low morale and lower staffing: The NIH's Vaccine Research Center has had many of its senior scientists leave over the last year, including the director, deputy director and chief medical officer," they wrote.

And it's no better at the CDC, they said:

> "The CDC has experienced a similar exodus. 'There's been a large amount of turnover. Morale is low,' one high-level official at the CDC told us. 'Things have become so political, so what are we there for?' Another CDC scientist told us: 'I used to be proud to tell people I work at the CDC. Now I'm embarrassed.'"

Officials complained the heads of their agencies "are using weak or flawed data to make critically important public health decisions, that such decisions are being driven by what's politically palatable to people in Washington or to the Biden administration and that they have a myopic focus on one virus instead of overall health."

One CDC scientist told Makary and Høeg about the shame and frustration within the agency over what happened to U.S. children during the pandemic.

The scientist said:

> "CDC failed to balance the risks of COVID with other risks that come from closing schools. Learning loss, mental health exacerbations were obvious early on and those worsened as the guidance insisted on keeping schools virtual. CDC guidance worsened racial equity for generations to come. It failed this generation of children."

The CDC also ignored natural immunity, according to some officials who declined to be named. "The vast majority of children have already had COVID, but this has made no difference in the blanket mandates for childhood vaccines."

By mandating "vaccines and boosters for young healthy people, with no strong supporting data, these agencies are only further eroding public trust," they added.

"I can't tell you how many people at the FDA have told me, 'I don't like any of this, but I just need to make it to my retirement,'" one official told Makary and Høeg.

Commenting on the revelations, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Children's Health Defense chairman and chief legal counsel, told The Defender, "The 33-year devolution of NIH from the world's premier bio research agency into Big Pharma's servile marketing subsidiary has been an excruciating downfall for NIH's dwindling cohort of researchers and scientists of integrity."

Kennedy added:

> "The COVID-19 catastrophe exposed to the world that NIH no longer does science or public health and confronted remaining employees with the dilemma that working at NIH means living against conscience. The current exodus captures the last remaining NIH officials who still have one."

Makary and Høeg said it's statistically impossible for everyone who works inside U.S. health agencies to have 100% agreement about "such a new and knotty subject."

"The fact that there is no public dissent or debate can only be explained by the fact that they are — or at least feel that they are — being muzzled," they wrote. "It is an ancient, moral requirement of our profession to speak up when we believe questionable treatments are being proposed. It is also good for the public."

"The leaders of the CDC, the FDA and the NIH should welcome internal discussion — even

dissension — based on the evidence," they wrote. "Silencing physicians is not 'following the science.'"

Makary: COVID vaccines for kids at center of controversy

The Daily Mail reported on Makary and Høeg's substack post — which also caught the attention of "Fox & Friends" and Fox News' Tucker Carlson.

In a July 17 interview on "Fox & Friends," Makary said senior officials — including all three leaders of the vaccine research center at the NIH and top experts at the FDA — are leaving because they see problems with the data and are frustrated.

"The top two vaccine experts at the FDA [in September 2021] quit in protest over political interference, and many people at the CDC told me that people are getting bad advice and we can't say anything," he said. "They're not allowed to go to the media, and at the center of it is the treatment of children."

"Fox & Friends" co-host Pete Hegseth brought up an example Makary cited in his article on the treatment of children:

> "In the subgroup of children aged six months to two years, the [Pfizer] trial found that the vaccine could result in a 99% lower chance of infection — but that they also could have a 370% increased chance of being infected.
>
> "In other words, Pfizer reported a range of vaccine efficacy so wide that no conclusion could be inferred. No reputable medical journal would accept such sloppy and incomplete results with such a small sample size. More to the point, these results should have given pause to those who are in charge of public health."

Yet, without that clinical data, they're still "pushing vaccines for infants and toddlers, for people who already had COVID and boosters for young children," Hegseth said.

"That's right. And parents are not falling for it after nearly a month of the government heavily pushing vaccines in kids under 5," Makary said. "Only 3% of parents have chosen to get their kids under 5 vaccinated. More parents believe in UFOs I think."

CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said "people are eager to get their kids vaccinated," but this is not the case, Makary told Hegseth. Because the "vaccine trial in kids under 5 failed" — the "study was done and it showed no benefit."

Makary said:

> "Now why are we even doing clinical trials if when you get a negative result showing it has no benefit, they're approving it anyway? You're making a mockery of the process. This is what people within the agencies are very frustrated about. This is why they're leaving.
>
> "Moderna's vaccine had a 4% efficacy and Pfizer, the results were so bad with no statistical significance that one of the internal people within the CDC said that you can inject a child with the vaccine or squirt it in their face and you'll get the same benefit."

"If the CDC wants to win some respect back, apologize and show some humility and less absolutism," he added.

In their article, Makary and Høeg said there's also an issue of how long a COVID-19 vaccine gives protection, as data in adults show that protection wanes in "a matter of months" and there's "no such data for young children."

"It seems criminal that we put out the recommendation to give mRNA Covid vaccines to babies without good data," a CDC physician told Makary. "We really don't know what the risks are yet. So why push it so hard?"

"The public has no idea how bad this data really is," a high-level FDA official told Makary and Høeg. "It would not pass muster for any other authorization."

"And yet, the FDA and the CDC pushed it through," Makary and Høeg wrote. That "slap in the face of science may explain why only 40% of parents in rural areas say their pediatricians did not recommend the Covid vaccine for their child."

White House calling the shots

In a July 15 interview with Tucker Carlson, Makary said doctors everywhere in the world, even in the government, should "always be free to speak up about their public health concerns."

Yet, right now in the government, "doctors are muzzled."

"I talked to many doctors for this piece, at NIH and CDC, who are extremely frustrated," Makary told Carlson. "They're smart people. They know vaccine efficacy of 4% doesn't warrant authorization. They also know there's no health emergency right now among kids six months of age."

Makary said he learned a lot from interviewing anonymous top officials, and they're being silenced:

> "They know the underlying data. They know it's inappropriate. They're not allowed to speak to anyone. If a reporter calls, the communications office has to approve the conversation and if they want to ask the scientist whether or not they want to do this. Tell us what you're going to tell the reporter and then we'll decide whether or not to approve it."

"At the CDC, a bunch of scientists actually said 'look we recognize the insanity of mass testing — trying to take down every case of the virus in the United States,'" Makary told Carlson. "So they came up with a plan to use sampling data like we do with influenza every year to get better numbers from the hospital of those truly in there for COVID, not just everybody with incidental COVID tests."

Makary said he was told by top officials the plan was "rejected by the White House."

"I heard from smart people who were just extremely frustrated that not only are they bypassing the normal scientific process, you really can't say anything because if they do, they know their jobs are at risk and they'll be treated very differently," Makary told Carlson.

"One person said there's no transparency as to how Dr. [Anthony] Fauci makes his decisions, he doesn't even consult with the real experts."

Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, professor of Medicine at Stanford University and a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research, praised the "blockbuster article" that confirmed scientists are being subject to tremendous political pressure to distort COVID-19 science and vaccine recommendations.

> An absolute blockbuster article by @TracyBethHoeg and @MartyMakary. Insider interviews with @CDCgov and @NIH scientists reveal tremendous political pressure to distort covid science and vax recommendations. Our public health agencies are in disarray. Excellent reporting! https://t.co/yx1SQXFWL4
>
> — Jay Bhattacharya (@DrJBhattacharya) July 14, 2022

Responding to Makary's interview with Carlson, Dr. Peter McCullough said in a tweet that the FDA needs "immediate oversight and ordered to retract EUA approval."

> Dr. Makary on @TuckerCarlson explains they failed in the toddler RCTs with inadequate efficacy and FDA EUA approval was fraud. Gross regulatory misconduct. FDA needs immediate oversight and ordered to retract EUA approval. Worse yet, no assurances on long-term safety in kids. pic.twitter.com/4fslNbPD8R
>
> — Peter McCullough, MD MPH (@P_McCulloughMD) July 17, 2022

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Megan Redshaw is a staff attorney for Children's Health Defense and a reporter for The Defender.

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